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## Gridlock could delay COVID funds until fall -- or longer

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The U.S. is headed for "a lot of unnecessary loss of life," the Biden administration says, if Congress fails to provide billions more dollars to brace for the pandemic's next wave. Yet the quest for that money is in limbo, the latest victim of election-year gridlock that's stalled or killed a host of Democratic priorities. President Joe Biden's appeal for funds for vaccines, testing and treatments has hit opposition from Republicans, who've fused the fight with the precarious politics of immigration. Congress is in recess, and the next steps are uncertain, despite admonitions from White House COVID-19 coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha of damaging conse-

quences from "every day we wait." Administration officials say they're running low on money to stock up on, or even begin to order, the latest vaccines, tests and treatments. Also lacking are funds to reimburse doctors treating uninsured patients and to help poor countries control the pandemic. House and Senate Democrats have been wrangling over how to resolve the stalemate and even over which chamber should vote first. It's an open question whether they'll ever get the GOP votes they'll need to pull the legislation through the 50-50 Senate, and prospects in the narrowly divided House are unclear as well.

Continued on next page



Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., takes a question during a news conference following a closed-door policy lunch, at the Capitol in Washington, on May 24, 2022.

Associated Press

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RESTAURANT

Continued from Front

"There is still an urgency to pass a COVID relief package," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said last week. "It's very, very much needed." Optimists hope the measure could start rolling once Congress returns next week. Pessimists say without quick resolution, Democrats may not have enough leverage to push the money to passage until early fall. That's when they could stuff it into legislation that will probably be needed to finance government — a bill that would avert a federal shutdown, a pre-election distraction Republicans will be desperate to avoid.

The heap of sidelined Democratic initiatives has grown this year, a victim of GOP opposition and rebellions by centrists like Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va. Casualties include bills on voting rights, health care, environment, taxes, gun curbs, abortion rights, policing tactics and an investigation of the 2021 Capitol storming by then-President Donald Trump's supporters. While lawmakers have approved massive packages financing federal agencies through September and helping Ukraine counter Russia's invasion, other priorities are dead or drifting, even as Democrats' days running Congress are likely dwindling. Republicans are favored to win House con-



White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha speaks during the daily briefing at the White House in Washington, April 26, 2022.

Associated Press

rol in November's elections and could grab the Senate as well, and Democrats' frustration is clear.

"So far it hasn't moved," Sen. Mazie Hirono, D-Hawaii, said of Biden's latest \$22.5 billion request for COVID-19, which he initially sent Congress three months ago. "But then neither has sensible gun legislation, neither has voting rights."

"The 50-50 Senate sucks," she said.

The COVID money is needed quickly, officials say. Their warnings have come with over 1 million U.S. deaths from the disease and a fresh variant that daily is hospitalizing over

100,000 Americans and killing more than 300. Both numbers are rising.

Officials say that lacking fresh funds, the U.S. is falling behind other countries that are already lining up for supplies needed for fall and winter. That's prompted Jha to plan for the chance that Congress provides no new money at all, threatening painful choices about what to do if there aren't enough vaccines or therapeutics for all who need them.

"It would be terrible," Jha told reporters recently. "I think we would see a lot of unnecessary loss of life if that were to happen."

Congress has provided

\$370 billion for purchasing supplies, for research and other public health initiatives to combat the pandemic, according to administration tallies obtained by The Associated Press. Around \$14 billion of it was unspent or not committed to contracts as of April 5, the documents show, serious money but an amount the administration says falls below the ultimate need. Most Republicans are skeptical about added pandemic funding. "I have a hard time believing that there's not enough money and not enough flexibility already" to use it, said Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D.

Counterintuitively but unsurprisingly for the always perplexing Senate, one intractable puzzle stymying Democrats is immigration.

Senate Republicans are demanding a vote on amending the pandemic legislation with language retaining Trump-era curbs that, citing COVID-19, have made it easier to bar migrants from entering the U.S.

A federal judge has blocked Biden from ending those restrictions. Liberals want Congress to eliminate the clampdown, but moderate Democrats in both chambers facing tough reelections want to vote to retain it.

The result: Testy divisions between the Democrats' two ideological factions, and knotty questions for party leaders about how to resolve them and push a pandemic package to passage.

Their task is compounded by disputes between House and Senate Democrats over why the COVID-19 battle remains unresolved. Senate Democrats note a bipartisan \$15.6 billion pandemic compromise was on the cusp of House passage in March until that chamber's progressive Democrats rebelled against spending cuts to pay for it, derailing the money. "We're waiting for the House to send us something," Schumer said last week. □

## Biden says 1st female armed services chief is 'about time'



Adm. Linda Fagan attends a change of command ceremony at U.S. Coast Guard headquarters, Wednesday, June 1, 2022, in Washington. Adm. Karl L. Schultz is being relieved by Fagan as the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Associated Press

By WILL WEISSERT  
Associated Press  
WASHINGTON (AP) — Presi-

dent Joe Biden hailed Adm. Linda Fagan as new Commandant of the U.S. Coast

Guard and the armed forces' first female service chief, declaring during a change of command ceremony on Wednesday, "It's about time."

"The trailblazing career of Admiral Fagan shows young people entering the services, we mean what we say: There are no doors — no doors — closed to women," Biden told around 2,000 cheering guests at Coast Guard headquarters. Those attending included service chiefs from other military branches and Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas.

The president added, "This is what an admiral and service chief in the United

States armed forces looks like" and thanked Fagan for "all that you've done throughout your career to open the doors of opportunity just a little bit wider" allowing "those following behind you a way through."

"Now we need to keep working to make sure Admiral Fagan may be the first but not the only," Biden said. "We need to see more women at the highest levels of command in the Coast Guard and across every service."

Fagan relieved Adm. Karl L. Schultz. In a brief address, Biden didn't mention Russia's war with Ukraine but said "the choices the world makes today will "shape

the direction of the world throughout the 21st century."

The president said his administration is "going to be calling on the Coast Guard more frequently" to combat the threats of climate change, given that Wednesday marked the first day of hurricane season that is anticipated to be "the seventh straight year of above-average hurricane activity in the Atlantic."

Biden also called the Coast Guard an "essential element" of his administration's Indo-Pacific strategy, and said he planned to engage to guard against overfishing by Chinese interests. □

# Harris calls water security a foreign policy priority

By SUMAN NAISHADHAM and MICHAEL PHILLIS

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Vice President Kamala Harris said Wednesday the U.S. is safer if people in other countries have sufficient water to drink, grow food and safely dispose of sewage, emphasizing that water access is a foreign policy priority.

Harris said making sure that every country has enough water will prevent conflicts, improve health outcomes and boost local economies. Working towards those goals will make the world more stable and secure, according to a newly released White House plan to address issues facing global water supplies and quality.

The Biden administration said it will support investments in water infrastructure abroad and provide technical expertise to help other countries manage their water resources.

More than two billion people around the world live in "water stressed" countries where demand for water exceeds supplies, the World Health Organization



President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris arrive to lay a wreath at The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery on Memorial Day, Monday, May 30, 2022, in Arlington, Va.

Associated Press

estimates. Harris said that reality will have a "profound impact on America's interests around the globe." "Water insecurity makes our world less stable," she said, adding that it can lead to "mass migration, which can put significant pressure on neighboring communities."

Republicans have criticized the Biden administration over the number of migrants arriving at the Southern border. Harris has frequently said tackling migration requires addressing "root causes," and previously proposed providing short-term relief to some

Central American countries dealing with extreme weather events. Wednesday's plan states that gaps in access to basic sanitation in Central America "contribute to inequality, drive migration, and foment civil unrest." Climate change will in-

crease temperatures and drive extreme weather, making water access in some regions worse. So far, the world has made modest, uneven progress towards improving sanitation and drinking water services, the White House said.

Inadequate water access has the most effect on women, who need water for menstrual hygiene and are often responsible for transporting water, the plan said.

The WHO estimates that 2 billion people worldwide drink from a water source contaminated with feces, which can cause diarrhea and other diseases. The problem kills an estimated 485,000 people a year, according to the organization.

U.S. Agency for International Development administrator Samantha Power said Russia's invasion of Ukraine has deprived millions in that country of clean water.

"Some leaders are taking advantage of water insecurity and actually wielding it as a weapon of war," said Power, who also spoke at the event. □

# U.S. agrees to update critical habitat for Florida manatees

By CURT ANDERSON

**ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)** —

U.S. wildlife officials have agreed to revise the critical habitat designation for Florida manatees, which have been dying in record numbers because water pollution is killing a main food source.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said in a court settlement made public Wednesday that it will publish a proposed revision by Sept. 12, 2024. The agreement comes in a long-running court case involving the Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife and the Save the Manatee Club.

The rule would bring enhanced federal scrutiny to projects that might affect the manatee in waterways in which the marine mammals are known to concentrate. One such area is the Indian River Lagoon on

Florida's east coast, where this winter officials successfully fed manatees tons of lettuce in an unprecedented experiment to prevent more starvation.

Last year, more than 1,100 manatees died largely from lack of food, a Florida record. This year, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission reports 562 manatee deaths as of late May. Dozens more manatees have been rescued and are being cared for at zoos, marine facilities and aquariums around the country.

The manatee critical habitat designation has not been updated since 1976; it's something manatee advocates have been pushing for since 2008. The state wildlife commission estimates there are about 7,500 manatees in the wild in Florida.

"Safeguarding the places

where manatees live will help put these incredibly imperiled animals back on a path to recovery," said Ragan Whitlock, an attorney for the Center for Biological Diversity. "Protecting the habitat of these magnificent creatures is long overdue, but we're happy these safeguards will soon be in place."

The broader issue for manatee survival is improving water quality. Their favored seagrass food is disappearing due to chronic pollution from agricultural, sewage and urban runoff, as well as other sources. Efforts are ongoing to restore the crucial seagrass beds but those are long-term projects.

Florida wildlife officials were heartened this spring to find that some seagrass is growing back naturally in key habitat areas. But they cautioned it would



Snorkelers and kayakers interact with an aggregation of manatees gathered at the entrance to the Three Sisters Springs during a cold morning Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022, in Crystal River, Fla.

Associated Press

only take one algae bloom caused by pollution to wipe out those gains.

Once it happens, manatee advocates say the critical habitat revision will be another key piece of the puzzle for saving these unique and beloved creatures.

The Fish and Wildlife Service "has delayed revising criti-

cal habitat for a decade, and now the manatee's predicament is so dire that revising critical habitat can no longer be put on the back burner," said Patrick Rose, executive director of the Save the Manatee Club, which was co-founded by Florida troubadour Jimmy Buffet. □

# Austin is largest U.S. city to challenge 2020 census numbers

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER**  
Associated Press

One of the most booming cities in the U.S. over the past decade thinks that it grew even bigger than the U.S. Census Bureau says it did.

Austin, Texas, became the largest U.S. city to challenge its 2020 census figures when it filed an appeal with the Census Bureau last week, saying it has more than the 961,855 residents tallied during the nation's once-a-decade head count.

City officials believe around 7,000 housing units were missed, mostly in newly developed neighborhoods. In some cases, housing units were placed in the wrong location, said Lila Valencia, the city demographer for Austin.

"We are one of the fastest-growing regions in the country," Valencia said. "Any region growing as fast as Austin is going to be hard to count."

Among the 50 biggest U.S. cities, Austin's growth rate of 21.7% between 2010 and 2020 was the second-largest in the nation, trailing only Fort Worth, Texas, which grew by 24%. As of last July, Austin was the 11th most-populous city in the U.S.

The city of Austin is at the center of one of the most booming metro areas in



Women walk through the Lakeshore area of Austin, Texas, with the skyline in the background on Aug. 31, 2016.

Associated Press

the U.S., one that was attracting about 150 new residents a day in the middle of the past decade. Figures released last week show that two Austin suburbs, Georgetown and Leander, were the two fastest-growing cities in the U.S. last year, expanding by more than 10% each.

Over the past several years, metro Austin has been a jobs magnet. It's home to Tesla's corporate headquarters as well as a high tech hub for entrepreneurs

attracted to its highly educated work force and the University of Texas' flagship school.

The census figures were used to divvy up congressional seats among the states and redraw political districts. Nothing can be done to change numbers for those purposes, but the outcome of any challenges can determine whether the cities and counties get their fair share when it comes to the distribution of \$1.5 trillion in annual federal

funding.

Valencia said an inaccurate count would cause Austin to miss an unknown amount of funding for affordable housing, parks and low-income students. It's unknown how many people live in the 7,000 housing units. However, an average of almost 2.4 people live in each household in Austin, which translates into 16,800 people.

"This affects the quality of life of residents, so it's worth it to make sure we get ev-

ery single dollar that we deserve," Valencia said.

The 2020 census undercounted the overall U.S. population by only 0.24%. The count was challenged by the coronavirus pandemic, natural disasters and political interference from the Trump administration. But some minority groups were undercounted at greater rates than the previous decade. Historically, racial and ethnic minorities, renters and young children are the people who have been undercounted. A report released several weeks ago by the Census Bureau showed that Texas was undercounted by 1.9%, which translates to about 560,000 residents. Texas was among several states with undercounts that did not direct as many resources as other states did to encourage residents to fill out census forms.

Until Austin filed a appeal, Detroit had been the largest U.S. city to challenge its 2020 census numbers. The Census Bureau told Detroit officials that they needed to provide more information before the city's appeal could move forward, a city spokesman said in an email Wednesday.

States and municipalities have until the middle of next year to appeal their census figures. □

# Victim in Brooklyn subway shooting sues gun maker Glock



Emergency personnel gather at the entrance to a subway station in the Brooklyn borough of New York, after a gunman filled a rush-hour subway train with smoke and shot multiple people, April 12, 2022.

Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — A woman wounded in last month's mass shooting on a New

York City subway filed a lawsuit Tuesday against the maker of the handgun al-

legedly used in the attack and its parent company, accusing the firearm manufacturer of "reckless disregard for human life."

Authorities say a 9mm Glock semiautomatic handgun was used in the attack.

In her lawsuit, filed in federal court in Brooklyn, Ilene Steur said Glock has "endangered the public health and safety" with the marketing, distribution and sales of its guns.

An email seeking comment was sent to Glock.

Steur was one of 10 people shot and wounded on April 12 when a gunman fired dozens of bullets in a train full of morning commuters.

The man charged in the attack, Frank James, has pleaded not guilty to terrorism and other counts.

In the lawsuit, Glock is accused of "marketing that emphasizes firearm characteristics such as their high capacity and ease of concealment, that appeal to prospective purchasers with criminal intent."

The lawsuit was filed as the nation reels from last week's massacre of 19 children and two teachers at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas. In February, the families of nine victims of the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting reached a \$73 million settlement in a lawsuit against

Remington, the maker of the rifle used in that attack. The families said the company should have never sold such a dangerous weapon to the public. They said their focus was on preventing future mass shootings by forcing gun companies to be more responsible with their products and how they market them.

Gun rights groups said the settlement would likely have little effect on rifle sales and gun makers, who continue to be shielded from liability in most cases under federal law. But some experts said it may prompt insurance companies to pressure gun makers into making some changes. □

# Canada OKs drug decriminalization test in British Columbia

By JIM MORRIS and ROB GILLIES

Associated Press

**VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP)** — Canada's government said Tuesday it will allow British Columbia to try a three-year experiment in decriminalizing possession of small amounts of drugs, seeking to stem a record number of overdose deaths by easing fear of arrest by users in need of help.

The policy approved by federal officials doesn't legalize the substances, but Canadians in the Pacific coast province who possess up to 2.5 grams of illicit drugs for personal use will not be arrested or charged. The three-year exemption taking effect Jan. 31 will apply to drug users 18 and over and include opioids, cocaine, methamphetamine and MDMA, also known as ecstasy.

"Stigma and fear of criminalization cause some people to hide their drug use, use alone, or use in other ways that increase the risk of harm. This is why the Government of Canada treats substance use as a health issue, not a criminal one," tweeted Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer.

The province's health officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, said that "we are taking an important step forward to removing that fear and shame and stigma."

"This is not one single thing that will reverse this crisis



Paramedics from B.C. Ambulance respond to a drug overdose in downtown Vancouver, Wednesday, June 23, 2021.

but it will make a difference," she added.

Dana Larsen, a drug policy reform activist, called the announcement "a step in the right direction," but said he would prefer to see development of a safe drug supply.

"It's not going to stop anybody dying of an overdose or drug poisoning," Larsen said. "The drugs are still going to be contaminated." "I think we need stores where you can go in and find legal heroin, legal cocaine and legal ecstasy and things like that for adults," he said. "The real solution to this problem is to treat it like alcohol and tobacco."

Alissa Greer, an assistant professor at Simon Fraser

University who has a doctorate in public health, said a regulated decriminalization of drugs could help lessen overdose deaths. She said it would be good for users to be able to obtain drugs from "a regulated supply through various models, whether that's a prescription model, a pharmacy model, more of a compassion club model ... rather than going down to 7-Eleven and buying heroin."

British Columbia is the first Canadian province to apply for an exemption from Canada's drug laws.

In 2001, Portugal became the first country in the world to decriminalize the consumption of all drugs. People caught with less than a

10-day supply of any drug are usually sent to a local commission, consisting of a doctor, lawyer and social worker, where they learn about treatment and available medical services.

In 2020, Oregon voted to become the first U.S. state to decriminalize hard drugs. Under the change, possession of controlled substances is a newly created Class E "violation," instead of a felony or misdemeanor. It carries a maximum \$100 fine, which can be waived if the person calls a hotline for a health assessment. The call can lead to addiction counseling and other services.

Carolyn Bennett, federal minister of mental health and addictions, said the

experiment in British Columbia could serve as a template for other jurisdictions in Canada.

"This time-limited exemption is the first of its kind in Canada," she said. "Real-time adjustments will be made upon receiving analysis of any data that indicates a need to change." Since 2016, there have been over 9,400 deaths due to toxic illicit drugs in British Columbia, with a one-year record of 2,224 in 2021. Vancouver Mayor Kennedy Stewart said he gets emails every Monday on drug deaths, including nine last week and 12 the week before. He said one week it was his own family member. "I felt like crying, and I still feel like crying. This is a big, big thing," Stewart said.

The 2.5-gram limit set by federal officials for the experiment falls short of the 4.5 grams requested by British Columbia. The higher amount already had been called too low a threshold by some drug-user groups that have said the province didn't adequately consult them.

Sheila Malcolmson, British Columbia's minister of mental health, said fear of being criminalized has led many people to hide their addiction and use drugs alone.

"Using alone can mean dying alone, particularly in this climate of tragically increased illicit drug toxicity," Malcolmson said. □

Associated Press

## Report: China bars Russian airlines with foreign planes

**BEIJING (AP)** — China has barred Russia's airlines from flying foreign-owned jetliners into its airspace, the Russian news outlet RBK reported, after President Vladimir Putin threw the aircrafts' ownership into doubt by allowing them to be re-registered in Russia to avoid seizure under sanctions over Moscow's attack on Ukraine.

The European Union, home to major aircraft leasing companies, banned the sale or lease of aircraft to Russian carriers in February.

Putin responded by approving the re-registration measure in March, which prompted suggestions foreign owners may never recover planes worth billions of dollars.

China's air regulator asked all foreign carriers last month to update ownership information and other details, RBK said, citing two unidentified sources. It said Russian airlines that couldn't provide documents showing their aircraft were "de-registered abroad" were barred from

Chinese airspace.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China didn't immediately respond to a request for confirmation and details of the decision.

President Xi Jinping's government said in February it has a "no limits" friendship with Moscow but has tried to distance itself from Putin's war. Beijing has criticized Western sanctions but appears to be avoiding steps that might be seen as helping Moscow for fear of possible penalties against Chinese companies. □



Aeroflot's passenger planes are parked at Sheremetyevo airport, outside Moscow, Russia, Tuesday, March 1, 2022.

Associated Press

# Exit polls: Danish voters now want to join EU defense policy

By **JAN M. OLSEN**  
Associated Press  
**COPENHAGEN, Denmark**

**(AP)** — Around two thirds of Danish voters in a referendum Wednesday backed joining the European Union's common defense policy, exit polls indicated, in a new example of a European country seeking closer defense links with allies after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

TV2 broadcaster said that 66.6% voted in favor of ending Denmark's 30-year opt-out from EU defense policy which would have limited practical effect for either Denmark or the EU and 33.4% against. Public broadcaster DR had the figures at 69.1% for and 30.9% against.

The polls were published just after voting ended.

The referendum follows fellow Nordic Sweden and Finland's historic bids to join NATO something to be taken up at a summit next month.

NATO member Denmark joining the EU's defense policy would have a relatively modest impact on Europe's security architecture, particularly compared to Sweden and Finland joining NATO. But Christine Nissen, a researcher with the Dan-



The five leaders of the political parties belonging to the 'National Compromise' campaign for a YES, in the center of Copenhagen, Wednesday June 1, 2022.

Associated Press

ish Institute for International Studies, said both moves were "part of the same story," and would strengthen military cooperation on a continent stunned by the war in Ukraine.

The main effect of abandoning the opt-out will be that Danish officials could stay in the room when EU colleagues discuss defense topics, and Danish forces can take part in EU military

operations.

It would be the first time that one of the four Danish opt-outs from the EU's Maastricht Treaty, which laid the foundation for political and economic union, is scrapped by voters in Denmark.

"A lot indicates that after 30 years Danes have decided to get rid of the defense waiver," Søren Pape, head of the opposi-

tion Conservative Party told party members.

"I believe people have voted yes because of the war in Ukraine. The 'yes' side has tried to misuse the war in Ukraine to make the Danes feel that it is important that we stand together," said Morten Messerschmidt, the leader of the opposition Danish People's Party and a leading opponent of removing the de-

fense opt-out.

One of the founding members of NATO, Denmark has stayed on the sidelines of the EU's efforts to build a common security and defense policy in parallel with the trans-Atlantic military alliance.

For decades, Europe's been a source of contention in Denmark. In 1992, voters set back plans to turn the European construction into a union by rejecting the Maastricht treaty amid widespread opposition to a federal European government that could limit the sovereignty of individual nations.

At an EU summit in Edinburgh, Scotland, later that year, European leaders agreed on a text with tailor-made provisions allowing Danes to ratify a revised treaty with four provisions.

They allowed Danes to stay out of a joint EU citizenship, justice and home affairs, the monetary union which allowed Danes to stay out of the euro and keep the krone, and defense.

The citizenship issue, which said European citizenship would not replace national citizenship, has since become irrelevant as other members later adopted the same position. □

# Israeli army kills Palestinian woman it says carried knife



A woman mourns Ghafran Warasna, who died after she was shot in the chest near the Al-Aroub refugee camp, close to the West Bank city of Hebron, Wednesday, June 1, 2022.

Associated Press

**JERUSALEM (AP)** — Israeli troops shot and killed a Palestinian woman in the occupied West Bank on Wednesday who they said had approached them while carrying a knife.

The military released a photo of what it said was the knife she was carrying. It said the soldiers were patrolling a highway near the Al-Aroub refugee camp in the southern West Bank. No

soldiers were wounded. The Palestinian Health Ministry identified the woman as Ghafran Warasna and said she was shot in the chest. The Palestinian Prisoners' Club said the 31-year-old had been released from Israeli prison in April after serving three months.

An Israeli security official said Warasna was jailed from January to March after attempting to stab an Israeli police officer in the West Bank city of Hebron.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media, said she attempted to stab the soldier on Wednesday at "point-blank range." There were no photos or videos immediately available to confirm the ac-

count. The Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate said Warasna had worked on and off as a journalist for more than a decade. Dream Radio, a local station in Hebron, said she was on the way to their studio for a broadcast when she was killed.

Israeli-Palestinian violence has intensified in recent weeks with near-daily arrest raids by the Israeli military in the West Bank following a string of attacks by Palestinians that have killed at least 19 people.

Tensions have soared following the killing in the West Bank of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, who worked for Al Jazeera, and an Israeli ultranationalist march through a Palestinian

neighborhood in east Jerusalem.

Recent weeks have seen at least 35 Palestinians killed by Israeli forces. Some were gunmen killed in fighting with Israel, while others were shot while allegedly throwing stones or firebombs at Israeli troops in the West Bank. But Abu Akleh, an unarmed woman and at least two people who were bystanders were also among those killed.

Palestinians have carried out dozens of stabbing attacks in recent years, often against Israeli soldiers. But Israel has also faced criticism from rights groups who say security forces sometimes use deadly force rather than arresting suspected attackers or stop them with nondeadly force. □

## Renewed hopes but more delays for Cubans seeking U.S. visas

By ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ

Associated Press

**CIENFUEGOS, Cuba (AP)** —

Like many Cubans before him, Roberto De la Yglesia left most of his family behind when he made his way to the United States with only his son in 2015, hoping that he could soon bring his wife and daughters to join him. Years later, the mechanical engineer in New Jersey and his family back in Cienfuegos, Cuba, are still waiting — with a mixture of renewed hope and skepticism — now that the Biden administration has said it will reactivate the long-stalled Family Reunification Program, which lets Cubans legally in the U.S. bring close relatives.

"My life is on pause," said his wife, Danmara Triana, sitting on the sofa of her house in Cienfuegos while surrounded by aging photos of the couple's life together. A few feet away, her 21-year-old daughter Claudia was awaiting the return from school of 7-year-old Alice.

"My day to day life hangs on this, — to see my son, to see my husband," Triana said. The 48-year-old accountant said she repeatedly checks the website of the U.S. Embassy in Havana for news.

"I get up in the morning and look at the telephone. Will I have an interview (for a visa) or won't I have an interview?"



**Danmara Triana, left, with her daughters Alice, center, and Claudia, show photos of them with their brother and father who moved to the United States in 2015, at their home in Cienfuegos, Cuba, Thursday, May 19, 2022.**

Associated Press

The Biden administration says that roughly 20,000 applications for family reunification visas have built up since 2017. That's when President Donald Trump effectively shut down the program by withdrawing diplomatic personnel from Cuba in response to a spate of mysterious illnesses among diplomats that many suspected were the result of some sort of directed wave attack.

But many similar incidents happened elsewhere — even in Washington — and the CIA has now determined they were unlikely to be the result of attacks by

Russia or other foreign adversaries.

While the administration said in April it would begin resuming the program, it has not yet offered a timeline for ramping up the U.S. diplomatic presence in Cuba.

So Triana and De la Yglesia wait.

U.S. officials told the couple in 2017, shortly before diplomats were withdrawn, that they qualified for the program and in 2020 they believed they had finished all the paperwork and paid all the fees.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit, adding to com-

plications.

"I feel stranded. I'm not based anywhere," said Claudia, who said she had dropped out of medical school, feeling "horribly unmotivated."

The withdrawal of diplomats was only one of many steps by the Trump administration to isolate Cuba and backtrack from a dramatic opening to the island under President Barack Obama. Trump enacted more than 200 measures, ranging from a ban on cruise ships to limits on money sent from the U.S. to restrictions on U.S. visitors.

Biden announced he

would undo some — but far from all — of the Trump-era restrictions.

With consular operations idled in Havana, U.S. officials told Cubans to seek visas at the operations in Guyana, across the Caribbean on the South American mainland — a costly and impractical option for most.

So with Cuba's economy in dire shape, increasing numbers have tried to reach the U.S. illegally, getting to South America or Mexico and making their perilous way to the U.S. border, adding to record wave of immigration.

U.S. Customs and Border Patrol says it detained Cubans 79,800 times at the U.S. border in the six months from October 2021 through March 2022 — more than double the figure for the full 12 months ending in September 2021 and five times the figure for the year before that.

Next door to Triana's house, 61-year-old Natacha González lives with her two grandchildren. Her daughter, like De la Yglesia, now lives in the U.S. and began the reunification process in 2017.

"I can speak for all the fathers and mothers who are in this country sacrificing so that there is can be a correct (legal) migration of our families," said González's daughter, Yanelis León, in a video call from Florida. □

## Nicaraguan government abolishes 83 more NGOs, civic groups

**MEXICO CITY (AP)** — The government of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega on Tuesday ordered the closure of 83 more civic groups and non-governmental organizations.

The move brought to 200 the number of such closures this year, and a total of 320 since protests against the Ortega regime erupted in 2018.

The institutions closed include the Nicaraguan Academy of Letters, which was founded in 1928 and had included opposition writers like Gioconda Belli and Sergio Ramírez.

The country's congress,

dominated by Ortega's Sandinista party, voted 75-0, with 16 abstentions, to close the groups. A law passed in 2020 requires such groups to register as "agents of a foreign government."

Ortega's government has moved against a number of non-governmental organizations that it views as opposition.

The president has claimed that groups receiving funding from abroad were part of a broader conspiracy to remove him from office in 2018.

Since Ortega's re-election to a fourth consecutive

term Nov. 7, judges have sentenced opposition leaders, including former high-level Sandinistas and former presidential contenders, to prison terms for "conspiracy to undermine national integrity."

Thousands have fled into exile since Nicaraguan security forces violently put down the antigovernment protests in 2018. Ortega says the protests were actually an attempted coup with foreign backing, aiming for his overthrow and encouraging foreign nations to apply sanctions on members of his family and government. □



**Rolando Alvarez, Bishop of Matagalpa, attends a press conference regarding the Roman Catholic Church's agreeing to act as "mediator and witness" in a national dialogue between members of civil society and the government in Managua, Nicaragua, May 3, 2018.**

Associated Press

## Urgent Care vs. Emergency Room: Where should you go?

Imagine yourself arriving on the beautiful island of Aruba. You've scheduled your days with exciting activities or to relax by the beach or pool. Of course, the least you would expect is to get sick or become in need of medical assistance. Because honestly, who does that while on vacation?

But when that happens, you need to know who and where to visit. So, the first step is to assess your medical need and its urgency. At Urgent Care Aruba, we offer medical assistance for non-life-threatening illnesses and injuries. We accept walk-ins from Monday to Friday from 8 am to 8

pm, Saturday from 8 am to 4 pm, Sunday/Holiday from 10 am to 2 pm. Therefore, receive a better cost value than the Emergency Room as the alternative option.

Other services offered at the Urgent Care Aruba is X-Ray (Without Appointment), Ultrasound (With Appointment), and Gynecology Services (With Appointment).

Visit us to assess your symptoms, and we'll provide you with a proper diagnosis and treatment since we will also provide you with a prescription if deemed necessary.

Our mission is to have you back on your vacation; that is why we offer quick, reliable, and efficient medical service.



Please view our comparison information chart: Urgent Care vs. Emergency Room.

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## Elliott Loonstra PLY achieved 5 (Fifth) place at the 2022 European Para Taekwondo Open Championships



**Elliott (Lefty) Loonstra PLY finished his participation in the 5 (fifth) place in the 2022 European Para Taekwondo Open Championships being his first participation in the old continent on Saturday May 21st, 2022, which was the competition day for the K44 Male -80 KG category.**

Elliott woke up feeling sick, so bad that the option of not participating was evaluated with his coach Luciano Mazzeo, since he felt not fit enough to fight. Finally, it was decided to compete for points that are important to maintain his world for ranking, while evaluating his condition during the competition. In the quarterfinals he faced Turkey, a very pow-

erful team and one of the biggest and most imposing teams in the world. The fight is 1 (one) round of 5 (minutes) with a 'time-out request' by each coach of 30 seconds. In his first minutes the Turkish competitor had the advantage, but little by little Elliott began to close that advantage, until the last 5 seconds where the score was in favor of the opponent 9 to 7. Elliott could have been able to equal the score and move on to the golden round, but unfortunately Turkey was able to connect and raise his mark with 1 kick ending the match 11 to 7 in favor of the Turk who moved on to semi-finals.

The European championship is one more step to-

wards the Grand Prix, for the first time in the history of Para Taekwondo that will take place in Sofia, Bulgaria on June 6, 2020. Only the first 15 of the ranking of each weight category can participate. Lefty is 7th (seventh) in the world. Elliott Loonstra PLY has been in Sofia, Bulgaria since the 23rd of May 2022 and our Paralympic athlete has been very focused for this important and historic event, preparing with his coach Luciano Mazzeo once again to fight for Aruba and put our flag high in the world. We wish Elliott Loonstra PLY the best of success and we thank the Loonstra family for their support as well as the people of Aruba for their support and kind comments. ☐



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**Secondary school pupils get to know Caribbean Research again**



In mid-June, NWO is organising the second edition of the Week of Caribbean Research. Education and knowledge transfer are key focuses. In the weeks before the event, researchers from the Caribbean region or those who are doing research in this region will give workshops to secondary school pupils.

The workshops will be offered at several schools in the Netherlands and at schools in Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten.

This series of workshops at secondary schools raises awareness among young people of the value of science in society. Why is research so important and what does a scientist actually do every day? What kind of jobs are associated with research and how do you go about getting one?

The workshops cover a range of topics. Young people are encouraged to ask the researchers many questions and carry out short assignments on the spot. Some of the questions that will be dealt with include: How does the economy of a 'small island state' such as Curaçao or Saba work? What exactly is data collection (the students will be asked to do an exercise, in which they design their own survey)? What is the relationship between food and sus-

tainability, and how can you keep your carbon footprint as low as possible? The pupils thus become involved in the programme that focuses on knowledge sharing and networking.

Tammy-Sue Lejuez, pupil 4 HAVO - Colegio Nigel Matthew, Aruba:

'Make more responsible choices. Think about what you eat, and how that increases your footprint.'

Amber van Veghel, researcher Food and Climate Change, University of Aruba  
 'I really enjoyed engaging with the children about food. We talked about culture and eating habits. And I also learned a lot from the students. For example, one group discovered that some coconut plantations have dug channels containing water so the coconuts make a "soft landing" in the water instead of on the hard ground.'

Programme of the Dutch Caribbean Research Week (13-17th of June 2022)  
<https://www.nwo.nl/en/meetings/dutch-caribbean-research-week>

Since the Caribbean programme was launched, NWO has organised three grant rounds. These have given a considerable boost to scientific research on and in the Dutch Caribbean. More information about the activities and results can be found on the programme page. □

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For Directions

## Divi Impact Foundation Provides Guests the Chance to Give Back to Aruba Employee-founded and led non-profit raised over \$400,000 in donations since 2019

**Divi & Tamarijn Aruba All Inclusive invites guests to give back to the local Aruba community through its One Dollar a Day Donation Program within the Divi Impact Foundation.**

Guests at either Divi Aruba All Inclusive or Tamarijn Aruba All Inclusive can donate \$1, or as much as they choose, every day of their stay with 100% of the funds going directly to the Divi Impact Foundation. While the Divi Impact Foundation has chapters at all of five Divi properties in Aruba, the One Dollar a Day Donation Program is available only for guests staying at Divi Aruba All Inclusive and Tamarijn Aruba All Inclusive.



In addition to the One Dollar A Day Program, employees across all the Divi Resorts properties in Aruba can participate in a paycheck contribution program. Employees can donate a minimum of \$3 per paycheck to the Foundation, which is then matched by Divi Resorts and Divi & Tamarijn

Aruba All Inclusive Through the One Dollar a Day and the Paycheck Contribution programs, the Divi Impact Foundation has raised over \$400,000 since 2019. These funds go directly back to the greater Aruba community and benefit causes ranging from local schools,

scholarship programs, food drives, green initiatives, arts and culture programming and more.

“Starting with 47 employees back in 2010, the Foundation is now comprised of over 500 employees,” shares Ricardo Vrolijk, President of the Divi Impact Foundation. “It is incredible to see the growth of our organization and the level of generosity coming from both our team members and guests. We look forward to continuing to build upon our mission of giving back to Aruba and its people.”

Founded in 2010 by a group of Divi Resorts employees, the Divi Impact Foundation was formed with the vision to inspire and motivate company leaders, owners, guests and employees to donate time, money and resources to help the community.

A sampling of annual programs that the Divi Impact Foundation gives back to includes:

- Adopt a School Program (Renovations + maintenance of a public school)
- Back to School Program (School supplies and uniform donations)
- Scholarship Program (Avail-

able for employee children older than 18 years old attending universities to help cover tuition costs and other boarding expenses)

Annual National Book Festival (Sponsor book donations to local elementary schools during the event)

Elderly Appreciation Program (Food donations)

Arts and Sports Programming (Sponsor sports teams and collaborate with arts institutions and/or Programs)

Health Awareness Programs (Collaborate with Divi Resorts and Grape Holding to sponsor additional health awareness resources to the teams)

For more information on the Divi Impact Foundation and how guests can participate in the One Dollar A Day Program, please visit please visit Facebook.com/Divi-Impact-Foundation. To learn more about Divi & Tamarijn Aruba All Inclusive and to book your stay, contact your travel professional at 1-800-554-2008 or [www.tamarijnaruba.com](http://www.tamarijnaruba.com) or [www.diviaruba.com](http://www.diviaruba.com).

The properties can also be found on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube and the resort

Blog. Facebook Live video content of the resorts can be viewed here.

### **About Divi & Tamarijn Aruba All Inclusive**

Located in Aruba, which is south of the hurricane belt, the Divi & Tamarijn Aruba All Inclusive are just 10 minutes from the airport and five minutes from Aruba's capital city, Oranjestad. The Divi Aruba and adjacent sister property Tamarijn Aruba are both set on beautiful Drui Beach, with a shopping arcade and the Alhambra Casino nearby. Guests staying at either the oceanfront Divi Aruba or adjacent oceanfront Tamarijn Aruba have use of all facilities and services of both properties. Stays include all meals and snacks at a choice of ten dining options, unlimited beverages at eight bars, access to four freshwater pools, use of a state-of-the-art fitness and watersports center, a wide range of activities including non-motorized water sports and nightly entertainment. For reservations and more information about Divi Aruba or Tamarijn Aruba, contact your travel professional, call 1-800-554-2008, or visit [www.diviaruba.com](http://www.diviaruba.com) or [www.tamarijnaruba.com](http://www.tamarijnaruba.com). □



# Should you use a reverse mortgage to pay for long-term care?

By **KATE ASHFORD** of **Nerd-Wallet**

Someone turning 65 has nearly a 7-in-10 chance of needing long-term care in the future, according to the Department of Health and Human Services, and many don't have the savings to manage the cost of assisted living. But they may have a mortgage-free home — and the equity in it, giving them the potential option of a reverse mortgage to help cover care costs.

Here's how to evaluate whether a reverse mortgage might be a good option.

## WHAT IS A REVERSE MORTGAGE?

A reverse mortgage is a loan or line of credit on the assessed value of your home. Most reverse mortgages are federally backed Home Equity Conversion Mortgages, or HECMs, which are loans up to a federal limit of \$970,800. Homeowners must be 62 years old to apply.

If you have at least 50% to 55% equity in your home, you have a good chance of qualifying for a loan or line of credit for a portion of



A home with a "Sold" sign is shown, Sunday, May 2, 2021, in Surfside, Fla.

Associated Press

that equity. How much you can access depends on your age and the home's appraised value. You must keep paying taxes and insurance on the home, and the loan is repaid when the borrower dies or moves out. If there are two borrowers, the line of credit remains

until the second borrower dies or moves out.

A reverse mortgage is a non-recourse loan, meaning if the loan amount ends up being more than the home's value, the borrower or inheritor won't have to pay more than the loan amount owed or what the

home could be sold for.

## CAN YOU USE A REVERSE MORTGAGE FOR LONG-TERM CARE?

A reverse mortgage can provide a crucial stream of income to pay for long-term care, but there are some limitations.

For instance, a reverse

mortgage requires that you live in the home. If you're the sole borrower of a reverse mortgage and you have to move to a care facility for a year or longer, you'll be in violation of the loan requirements and must repay the loan.

Because of the costs, reverse mortgages are also best suited for a situation where you plan to stay in your home long-term. They don't make sense if your home isn't right for aging in place or if you plan to move in the next three to five years, says Marguerita Cheng, a certified financial planner in Potomac, Maryland. But for home health care or paying for a second borrower who's in a nursing home, home equity can help bridge the gap. If you want to pay as you go and not pull money out of securities in a down market, you can pull it out of your home equity, says Dennis Nolte, a CFP in Winter Park, Florida.

## ADVANTAGES OF A REVERSE MORTGAGE

Your home is generally one of your biggest assets, and using its value to handle long-term care costs can make sense. □

# Sheryl Sandberg, longtime No. 2 exec at Facebook, steps down

By **BARBARA ORTUTAY**  
**SAN FRANCISCO (AP)** —

Sheryl Sandberg, the No. 2 executive at Facebook owner Meta, is stepping down, according to a post Wednesday on her Facebook page. Sandberg has served as chief operating officer at the social media giant for 14 years. She joined from Google in 2008, four years before Facebook went public.

Meta did not immediately respond to a message for comment.

"When I took this job in 2008, I hoped I would be in this role for five years. Fourteen years later, it is time for me to write the next chapter of my life," Sandberg wrote on her Facebook page. She did not say what she planned to do.

Sandberg has led Facebook — now Meta's — advertising business and was responsible for nurturing it

from its infancy into an over \$100 billion-a-year powerhouse.

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg said in his own Facebook post that he doesn't plan to replace Sandberg in the company's existing structure. Javier Oliván will serve as Meta's new COO. Zuckerberg said this "this role will be different from what Sheryl has done. It will be a more traditional COO role where Javi will be focused internally and operationally, building on his strong track record of making our execution more efficient and rigorous."

While Sandberg has long been Zuckerberg's No. 2, even sitting next to him — pre-pandemic, at least — in the company's Menlo Park, California, headquarters, she also had a very public-facing job, meeting with lawmakers, holding focus groups and speaking out

on issues such as women in the workplace and most recently, abortion.

"I think Meta has reached the point where it makes sense for our product and business groups to be more closely integrated, rather than having all the business and operations functions organized separately from our products," Zuckerberg wrote.

Sandberg has had some public missteps at the company, including her attempt to deflect blame from Facebook for the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. In an interview later that month that was streamed by Reuters, she said she thought the events of the day were "largely organized on platforms that don't have our abilities to stop hate, don't have our standards and don't have our transparency."

This turned out to be un-



In this Sept. 5, 2018, file photo, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg testifies before the Senate Intelligence Committee hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

true. Internal documents, revealed by whistleblower Frances Haugen later that year, showed that Facebook's own employees were concerned about the company's halting and often reversed response to rising extremism in the U.S.

"Haven't we had enough

time to figure out how to manage discourse without enabling violence?" one employee wrote on an internal message board at the height of the Jan. 6 turmoil. "We've been fueling this fire for a long time and we shouldn't be surprised it's now out of control." □

**CROSSWORD**

By THOMAS JOSEPH

**ACROSS** 2 First name

1 Bring up in scat

5 Hike route 3 Prayer

10 Sailors' finish

saint 4 Annoying

11 Stable driver

sight 5 Pollster's

12 Boxer find

biter 6 Metal

13 Rise up fastener

14 Saharan 7 Com-

sight motion 19 Missing

16 Wrench or 8 Ailing 31 Ship staffs

hammer 9 Rented 20 Brazen-

20 Male out 22 Make 33 Diva's

escort 11 "Encanto" headway 34 John

23 Great character 25 Look after 35 Some

Leap 15 Secluded 26 Releases sheep

Forward spot from duty 36 Grass

leader 17 Old 28 Goes coating

24 Saw Atlanta under 37 2001 Will

25 Circus arena 30 Arizona Smith film

structures 18 Stable player, 38 Chess

27 Maui diet for short pieces

souvenir

28 Biased,

in a way

29 Battlefield

worry

32 Paul, to

John, e.g.

36 Rich fabric

39 Ship's

front

40 Chooses

41 Fatigue

42 Flirtatious

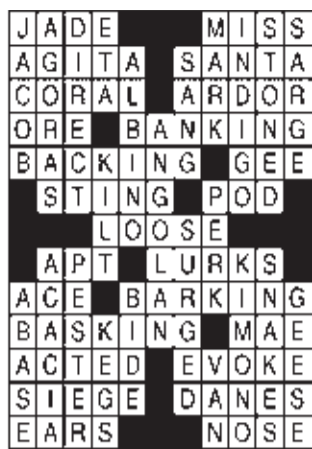
signals

43 Utters

**DOWN**

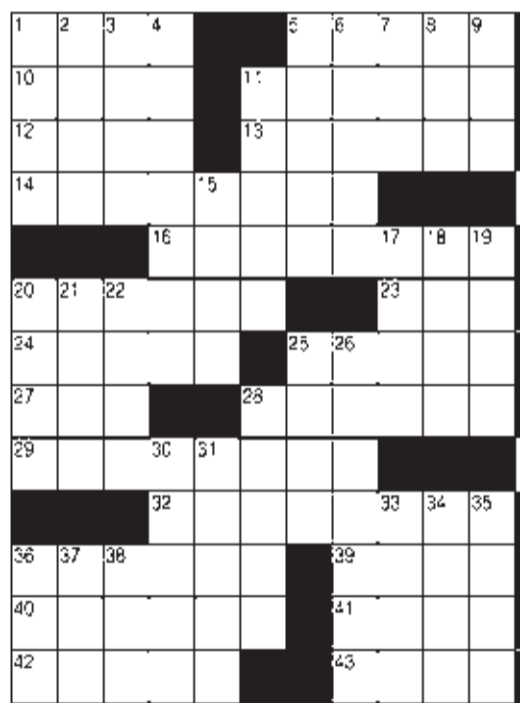
1 Game

callers



Yesterday's answer

- 19 Missing
- 20 Brazen-
- 21 Notion
- 22 Make
- 23 Great
- 24 Saw
- 25 Circus
- 26 Releases
- 27 Maui
- 28 Biased,
- 29 Battlefield
- 30 Arizona
- 31 Ship staffs
- 32 Paul, to
- 33 Diva's
- 34 John
- 35 Some
- 36 Grass
- 37 2001 Will
- 38 Chess



6-2

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's. X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-2 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

XWY ETXA RL LB V XVQ XL

X YXZ RW COWQ? ATQW, RM

QUQV, PBSQ IQVMQPA YXZL

— CXSQ L VOLLQHH HBEQHH  
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IF HISTORY REPEATS  
ITSELF, I AM SO GETTING A DINOSAUR. —  
UNKNOWN

# Here's how the government wants to disaster-proof your home



This image released by the National Park Service, shows a collapsed beachfront home along Ocean Drive in Rodanthe, N.C., on Wednesday, Feb. 9, 2022.

Associated Press

By FREIDA FRISARO

**MIAMI (AP)** — On this first day of the Atlantic hurricane season, federal officials are launching a new initiative to modernize building codes so that communities can be more resilient to hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, and other extreme weather events that are intensifying due to climate change.

Deanne Criswell, the administrator for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and Ali Zaidi, the deputy national climate adviser to President Joe Biden, discussed the initiative Wednesday during a briefing at the National Hurricane Center in Miami, where recovering from a hit similar to Hurricane Andrew could cost hundreds of billions today.

Updated building codes provide a range of smart design and construction methods "that save lives, reduce property damage, and lower utility bills," according to a news release announcing the National Initiative to Advance Building Codes. It applies to new construction and to homes and buildings that are rebuilt due to damage.

"The adoption of hazard-resistant building codes saves communities \$11 per every \$1 invested," Criswell said, citing a finding by the National Institute of Building Sciences.

The initiative, approved by the National Climate Task Force earlier this year, comes amid signs that coastal communities should brace themselves for more intense storms. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicted 14 to 21 named storms in the Atlantic this season, with six to 10 becoming hurricanes and three to six turbo-charging into major hurricanes with winds greater than 110 mph (177 kph).

It's already begun with Agatha, a storm that battered Mexico over the past few days and may re-form in the Gulf of Mexico and possibly threaten parts of Florida by this weekend, the hurricane center said.

"This initiative is proof that acting on climate change delivers countless benefits to all Americans, especially in our most vulnerable communities," said Gina McCarthy, the president's national climate adviser.

The program is designed to help buildings withstand damage caused by all natural disasters, including wildfires, tornadoes and floods.

The codes ensure, for example, that roofs can withstand hurricane-force winds, that construction materials are resistant to flood damage and that insulation helps reduce heating and cooling costs, officials said.

It's a "no-brainer" to make new houses and buildings more energy efficient as a means of reducing climate change impacts, said Wendell Porter, professor emeritus of building professions at the University of Florida. But location is what really matters, he said.

"You don't want to rain on anybody's parade," Porter said. "A big announcement that they're going to build better houses, that's always good news. But until you decide to not build in certain locations, it's a waste of time."

Take coastal communities, for example.

"It's really hard to build a structure to actually withstand flooding," Porter said, "There's only two real good methods and that's either build it up, or retreat. Stilts or away."

After Miami-Dade County was hit by Hurricane Andrew, stringent building code enforcement followed. But so did population growth, coastal development and climate change. Andrew was the most expensive natural disaster in U.S. history at the time, causing more than \$26 billion of damage in Florida's most populous areas.

Likewise, officials said, education will be a key element of the modernized building codes. A FEMA analysis found that only 35% of cities, counties and towns across the country have updated hazard-resistant building codes. Cost is a factor: Construction and renovation designed for disaster resiliency can be more expensive. □

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# Pinkett Smith talks hair-loss 'shame,' outcome of Oscar slap

By LYNN ELBER  
AP Television Writer

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Jada Pinkett Smith turned her husband's Oscar-night blowup into a teachable moment about alopecia areata, the hair-loss disorder affecting her and millions of others that, in some cases, can impact a person's sense of identity.

"Considering what I've been through with my own health and what happened at the Oscars, thousands have reached out to me with their stories," Pinkett Smith said on Wednesday's episode of "Red Table Talk." The actor said she chose to use "this moment to give our alopecia family an opportunity to talk about what it's like to have this condition" and what it is. Her guests included the mother of a 12-year-old girl, Rio Allred, who was bullied over her hair loss and died by suicide, and a physician who explained the different types of the disorder. Before tackling the subject, Pinkett Smith addressed events at the March 27 Academy Awards. She and husband Will Smith, a best-actor nominee, were in the audience as presenter Chris Rock cracked a joke



Jada Pinkett Smith appears on an episode of her online series "Red Table Talk."

Associated Press

at Pinkett Smith's expense. "Jada, I love you. 'G.I. Jane 2,' can't wait to see it," Rock said. Pinkett Smith, who has spoken publicly about her alopecia, had a closely shaved head similar to that of Demi Moore in the 1997 movie.

Smith strode from his front-row seat to the stage and slapped Rock, shocking the comedian and the audience. Smith, who returned

to his seat and later accepted the Oscar for "King Richard," subsequently apologized to Rock but was banned from the ceremony for 10 years by the film academy.

"Now, about Oscar night, my deepest hope is that these two intelligent, capable men have an opportunity to heal, talk this out, and reconcile," Pinkett Smith said on "Red Table

Talk" in an indirect reference to Smith and Rock. "The state of the world today, we need them both, and we all actually need one another more than ever.

"Until then, Will and I are continuing to do what we have done for the last 28 years, and that's keep figuring out this thing called life together," said Pinkett Smith, who previously had

addressed the incident in a brief Instagram post that read "'This is a season for healing and I'm here for it.'" The actor ("Girls Trip," "Matrix" films), who hosts the Facebook Watch talk show with her daughter, Willow, and Adrienne Banfield Norris, her mother, said that millions of people are living with alopecia and what she called the "shame" that surrounds it. The condition, particularly for Black women, can affect a person's perception of themselves and force them to frequently confront others' perceptions about beauty, hair and race and culture. Rio's mother, Nicole Ball, recounted the impact of the Oscar incident, which took place less than two weeks after her daughter's death. "What is the universe doing right now? This is crazy," Ball recalled thinking. "People are going to be Googling, 'What is alopecia....What is this that we've never heard of?' It's not a joke."

According to the National Alopecia Areata Foundation, the disorder affects as many as 6.8 million people in the United States of any age, sex and ethnic group, and the symptoms can vary. □

# Company to Las Vegas chapels: No more Elvis-themed weddings



Elvis impersonator Brendan Paul, right, walks down the aisle during a wedding ceremony for Katie Salvatore, center, and Eric Wheeler at the Graceland Wedding Chapel in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

**LAS VEGAS (AP)** — Las Vegas chapels of love that use Elvis Presley's likeness could find themselves becoming Heartbreak Hotels. The licensing company that controls the name and image of "The King" is

ordering Sin City chapel operators to stop using Elvis in themed ceremonies, the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported on Monday. Authentic Brands Group sent cease-and-desist letters in early May to multiple cha-

pels, which are expected to be compliant by now. With Elvis so closely tied to Vegas' wedding industry, some say the move could decimate their businesses. "We are a family-run business, and now we're hanging with the big dogs," said Kayla Collins, who operates LasVegasElvisWeddingChapel.com and the Little Chapel of Hearts with her husband. "That's our bread and butter. I don't get it. We were just hitting our stride again through COVID, then this happens." Clark County Clerk Lynn Goya, who led a marketing campaign promoting Las Vegas as a wedding destination, said the order for chapels to stop using Elvis couldn't have come at a worse time for the sector. The city's wedding industry generates \$2 billion a

year, and officials say Elvis-themed weddings represent a significant number of the ceremonies performed. "It might destroy a portion of our wedding industry. A number of people might lose their livelihood," Goya said. One chapel last weekend had its Elvis impersonator change instead into a leather jacket, jeans and a fedora for a "rock 'n' roll" themed ceremony, the Review-Journal reported. Graceland Wedding Chapel, which performs 6,400 Elvis-themed weddings per year, has not been served a warning yet, according to manager Rod Musum. Authentic Brands Group did not immediately respond Tuesday to an emailed request for comment.

The licensing company oversees the estates of big names like movie star Mari-

lyn Monroe and boxer Muhammad Ali and 50 consumer brands.

In the cease-and-desist letter, the company said it will halt unauthorized use of "Presley's name, likeness, voice image, and other elements of Elvis Presley's persona in advertisements, merchandise and otherwise." The letter also said "Elvis," "Elvis Presley," "and "The King of Rock and Roll" are protected trademarks.

The order should not translate into legal action against Elvis-themed stage shows in Las Vegas such as "All Shook Up" because impersonating someone for live performances such as shows is considered an exception under Nevada's right of publicity law, according to Mark Tratos, a local attorney who helped write the statute. □

## Swiatek benefits from double bounce no-call; into French SF

By HOWARD FENDRICH  
AP Tennis Writer

**PARIS (AP)** — Iga Swiatek benefited from the chair umpire's no-call on a double bounce that gave her a key first-set service break during a match-altering five-game run and the French Open's No. 1 seed moved into the semifinals with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over Jessica Pegula on Wednesday.

Swiatek extended her winning streak to 33 matches, the longest on tour since Serena Williams won 34 in a row in 2013.

Swiatek will face No. 20 Daria Kasatkina in one women's semifinal Thursday, when the other will be No. 18 Coco Gauff, an 18-year-old American, against unseeded Martina Trevisan, a 28-year-old from Italy.

Only Swiatek has previously participated in the final four at a major tournament, losing in the semifinals at the Australian Open in January and taking the title at the 2020 French Open when she was ranked outside the top 50.

"This year it's a little bit different, because I'm not an underdog," she said, "and everything has changed, honestly."

Kasatkina beat No. 29 Veronika Kudermetova 6-4, 7-6 (5) in a match between two Russian players who will not be allowed to compete at Wimbledon later this month because of that country's invasion of Ukraine.

Theirs was a mistake-filled quarterfinal, with the players combining for 75 unforced errors, 50 by Kudermetova. That allowed



Poland's Iga Swiatek stretches to return the ball to Jessica Pegula of the U.S. during their quarterfinal match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium Wednesday, June 1, 2022 in Paris.

Associated Press

Kasatkina to win despite coming up with just 16 winners over the course of 165 points.

"It was a roller coaster," said Kasatkina, who hadn't reached a major quarterfinal in four years. "Just happy with the way I stayed on the court and didn't put myself in the situation where I was disappointed and stuff. So really happy with this mental part."

In the men's quarterfinals Wednesday, 2014 U.S. Open champion Marin Cilic got to the French Open semifinals for the first time by hitting 33 aces to defeat No. 7 Andrey Rublev 5-7, 6-3, 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (10-2) in 4 hours, 10 minutes.

The 20th-seeded Cilic, a 33-year-old from Croatia who compiled 88 total winners to Rublev's 35, is one of five active men to have made it to at least the semi-

finals at each of the four major tournaments. He'll face No. 8 Casper Ruud or 19-year-old Holger Rune on Friday for a berth in the final.

A day after her 21st birthday, Swiatek was not at her dominant best against the 11th-seeded Pegula, a 28-year-old from New York whose parents own the NFL's Buffalo Bills and NHL's Buffalo Sabres.

"Getting old, but still fresh," Swiatek wrote with a silver marker on the lens of a court-side TV camera.

She was more pleased with herself than after her fourth-round win, in which she ceded a set for the first time in more than a month and felt "kind of like a cold shower."

"It really helped me the last match, to kind of remind me what I have to do to make my tennis more effi-

cient," Swiatek said.

As usual for most of this season, Swiatek was good enough to end up on the right side of the scoreline. She has not lost a match since February and claimed the title at each of her past five tournaments. Swiatek rose atop the WTA rankings in March after the woman who was No. 1, Ash Barty, retired at age 25. Rather than being derailed by the sudden switch in status, Swiatek has flourished, going 16-0 since rising from No. 2.

On a sunny afternoon at Court Philippe Chatrier, with the temperature above 70 degrees Fahrenheit (20 Celsius), Swiatek's start was so-so for the second match in a row, although she did wind up with nearly twice as many winners as Pegula, 30 to 16.

"I feel like the ball is flying

a little bit faster," Swiatek said, "so I had to adjust to that, for sure."

She trailed 3-2 in the opening set, and it was 3-all when she held a break point while Pegula served. Pegula tried a drop shot, and Swiatek ran to it, reaching out to flip the ball over the net at an impossible angle. Pegula could not get to that response, and the point went to Swiatek, giving her a 4-3 edge. As Pegula went to the sideline for the ensuing change-over, she looked toward her coach, David Witt, in the stands, perhaps wondering whether Swiatek's shot should have counted.

A TV replay confirmed it should not have: The ball landed a second time on her side of the net before going off her racket, so chair umpire Emmanuel Joseph should have ruled the point belonged to Pegula. But Joseph missed the extra bounce and, unlike at some other tournaments, officials at the French Open can't consult video to make sure they get a call correct. From there, Swiatek wouldn't drop another game until she led by a set and 1-0 in the second. In all, she took 10 of the last 12 games. When a reporter mentioned that double bounce, Swiatek seemed to stifle a smile, as if she had anticipated a question about that point.

"If it was two bounces, then I'm sorry," she said. "But at that point I was so focused to just get to the ball and to win the point that it is like I just went forward. These moments are pretty tricky, because it's all on the umpire." □

## Twins' Carlos Correa tests positive for COVID-19

By DAVE HOGG  
Associated Press

**DETROIT (AP)** — Carlos Correa has tested positive for COVID-19, the Minnesota Twins said after Monday's 7-5 loss to the Detroit Tigers. "We found out during the game," Twins manager Rocco Baldelli said. "He's back at the hotel resting and we'll figure out what

the coming days will mean for him."

Baldelli said the 27-year-old shortstop had not been feeling well but doesn't have significant symptoms. "He's under the weather, but nothing above and beyond that," Baldelli said. "I think resting and hydrating are the most important things for him right now."

Monday's game was the first in a five-game, four-day series against the Tigers.

"We've had some guys stay behind in cities, but there are other possible options," Baldelli said. "We're going to be here for a while, so no one needs to go anywhere yet."

Correa is hitting .279 with a .751 OPS in his first season

with the Twins.

He left the Houston Astros after seven seasons to sign a \$105.3 million, three-year

contract in March, a deal that allows him to opt out after the 2022 and 2023 seasons. □



# NBA Finals preview: Breaking down Celtics-Warriors matchup



Left: Boston Celtics forward Jayson Tatum (0) receives the NBA Eastern Conference MVP trophy after defeating the Miami Heat in Game 7 of the NBA basketball Eastern Conference finals playoff series, Sunday, May 29, 2022, in Miami. Right: Golden State Warriors celebrate with the conference trophy after defeating the Dallas Mavericks in Game 5 of the NBA basketball playoffs Western Conference finals in San Francisco, Thursday, May 26, 2022.

Associated Press

**SAN FRANCISCO (AP)** — Preview capsule for the NBA Finals, which start Thursday:  
**East No. 2 BOSTON CELTICS (51-31, 12-6) vs. West No. 3**

**GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS (53-29, 12-4)**  
**Season series:** Tied, 1-1. Golden State won at Boston 111-107 on Dec. 17. The Celtics rolled on Golden

State's home floor in the rematch on March 16, winning 110-88.  
**Schedule:** Thursday and Sunday at San Francisco, June 8 and 10 at Boston,

June 13 at San Francisco if necessary, June 16 at Boston if necessary, June 19 at San Francisco if necessary.  
**Storyline:** A rematch of the 1964 NBA Finals. Golden

State is seeking a fourth championship in eight years, while the Celtics are trying to break a tie with the Los Angeles Lakers and become the first team with 18 NBA titles. Celtics coach Ime Udoka will seek to become the 10th coach in NBA history to win a title in his first season, something that Golden State's Steve Kerr did with the Warriors in 2015. The starters matchup: Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson, Draymond Green, Andrew Wiggins and Kevon Looney for the Warriors against Marcus Smart, Jayson Tatum, Jaylen Brown, Al Horford and Robert Williams III for the Celtics. Put simply, it's the great offense of Golden State against the great defense of Boston. The experience edge goes to the Warriors. But Smart, Brown and Tatum have been building for this moment and are now, officially, a Big 3. Smart — the defensive player of the year — will draw the primary assignment on Curry, the most prolific and probably most creative 3-point shooter in the history of the game.

**The bench keys:** Derrick White had a huge Eastern Conference finals for Boston, and Jordan Poole has exceeded all reasonable expectations for Golden State throughout the playoffs. If the Warriors get Gary Payton II back to form in this series after his elbow fracture, that's a huge plus. Grant Williams would be another X-factor off the bench for Boston and will likely log huge minutes anyway because it wouldn't seem likely that Robert Williams III — dogged by knee recovery — will be on the floor a ton.

**Injury watch:** Williams III has been on the floor for Boston, but limited and limping often. Otto Porter Jr. (left foot) is planning to return in this series for the Warriors. Payton II's return would give the Warriors a boost, particularly on the defensive end. The Warriors' Andre Iguodala, who has said he's retiring after this season, has missed the last 12 games with a cervical disc issue. □

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